

OVERVIEW OF UTAH'S MONITORING SYSTEM

The Utah State Office of Education, Special Education Services (USOE-SES) has the responsibility of monitoring compliance with federal and state requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). This responsibility is administered within the framework of supporting positive results for students with disabilities.

USOE-SES's continuous improvement monitoring system reflects the federal intent to emphasize a data-driven, systemic approach to compliance and improvement of results for children with disabilities. Previous UPIPS implementation has been generally effective in assisting LEAs in maintaining procedural compliance with federal and state regulations, but has also resulted in increased LEA commitment to the monitoring process, as well as more involvement in implementing corrective action plans and ownership in results.

The 2005 revision of UPIPS provides for additional levels of SEA support for LEAs with continuing uncorrected compliance issues during previous UPIPS cycles, creating a process that is differentiated by results. This differentiation will include the level of monitoring by the SEA, according to the LEA's performance in a variety of pre-identified areas. Methods and procedures used to implement the Utah Program Improvement Planning System are consistent, but flexible, in order to adapt to the individual needs of students, educational settings, and administrative realities.

While continuing the monitoring of IDEA compliance, renewed focus is on the systematic evaluation of the impact of special education services on student achievement. Thus, this model has shifted from the previous emphasis of episodic procedural monitoring to one of active strategic planning and continuous improvement within the framework of compliance.

Objectives of the Continuous Improvement Monitoring System

The monitoring system has six major objectives:

- Ensure a meaningful and continuous process that focuses on improving academic and social outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Ensure compliance with IDEA federal regulations and Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules.
- Connect district-level and school-level improvement efforts with IDEA requirements.
- Support each school district and charter school in the process of self-assessment and evaluation of compliance and program effectiveness.
- Support each school district and charter school in the process of improving compliance and program effectiveness.
- Link program improvement activities with personnel development planning.

Monitoring Process Themes

The overall system is based on the following underlying principles or themes.

UTAH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING SYSTEM (UPIPS)

- **Continuity.** An effective accountability system is continuous rather than episodic, linked to systemic change, and integrates self-assessment with continuous feedback and response.
- **Partnership with stakeholders.** The LEA works in partnership with diverse stakeholders. This collaboration impacts the following areas: the collection and analysis of self-assessment data, the identification of critical issues and solutions to problems, and the development, implementation, and oversight of improvement strategies to ensure compliance and improved results for students with disabilities.
- **LEA accountability.** LEAs are accountable for identifying strengths and areas of concern based upon data analysis; identifying, implementing and revising strategies for program improvement, and annual measurement and progress reports.
- **Self-assessment.** Each LEA works with stakeholders to design and implement a self-assessment process that focuses on improving results for students with disabilities.
- **Data-driven process.** The improvement process in each LEA is driven by data that focuses on improved results for students with disabilities. Each LEA collects and uses data on an ongoing basis, aligned with the LEA's performance goals and indicators. Data that are available and can be critical to the self-assessment process include: personnel needs, graduation and drop-out rates, performance of students with disabilities on state- and district-wide assessments, rates at which children with disabilities are suspended and/or expelled from school, and rates of identification and placement of students from minority backgrounds.
- **Technical assistance.** Because the focus of the monitoring process is on continuous improvement, technical assistance is a critical component of the process. Key components of technical assistance are the identification and dissemination of promising practices and personnel development. LEAs are encouraged to include these components as part of their improvement plan.

Utah's Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)

Utah's continuous improvement monitoring system is called UPIPS. The system is based on the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) delineation of important program areas for special education in states and school districts/charter schools. Each program area has goals specified as desired results for students with disabilities.

○ I. General Supervision

- Goal 1--Free Appropriate Public Education is available to all children in the district/charter school because the state and district/charter school monitoring system and other mechanisms for ensuring compliance, and parent and child protections are systematic and utilize data to develop Corrective Action Plans and activities.
- Goal 2--All members of the IEP team have timely access to personnel preparation and support activities that facilitate improved educational results for students with disabilities and the implementation of IDEA.

UTAH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING SYSTEM (UPIPS)

- **II. Parent Involvement**
 - Goal 3--Parents and eligible youth with disabilities are aware of and have access to their rights and responsibilities within the system for parent and child protections.
 - Goal 4--Programs and services for children with disabilities improve because parents are actively involved in program improvement activities.
- **III. Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment**
 - Goal 5--The needs of students with disabilities are determined based upon state definitions, eligibility criteria and appropriate evaluation procedures.
 - Goal 6--All students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment that promotes a high quality education and prepares them for employment and independent living.
 - Goal 7--Students with disabilities are making continuous progress within the state and district/charter school system for educational accountability (U-PASS).
- **IV. Transitions**
 - Goal 8--Children exiting Part C receive the services they need by their third birthday, when appropriate.
 - Goal 9--All students with disabilities, beginning at age 16, or earlier if appropriate, receive individualized, coordinated transition services, designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities.
- **V. Disproportionality**
 - Goal 10-- Students are identified as eligible under IDEA following district/charter school and state policies and procedures that ensure those from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds are not over identified.

The Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) operates on a five-year cycle that is based on the concept that monitoring is an ongoing process. A select group of LEAs will enter into Round 2--Year 1 each calendar year.

Round 2A

Year 1	SELF-ASSESSMENT & DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Year 2	IMPLEMENTATION OF SELF-ASSESSMENT FINDINGS & ON-SITE VALIDATION VISIT FROM USOE
Year 3	IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN & CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN & VERIFICATION OF RESULTS OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

UTAH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING SYSTEM (UPIPS)

Year 4 CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM
IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Year 5 CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM
IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Round 2--Year 1

SELF-ASSESSMENT & DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Step 1: Pre-Planning

The USOE-SES staff will:

- Identify the LEAs that will participate in Round 2--Year 1 activities.
- Train LEA staff on the state's monitoring system, UPIPS.
- Send a letter of explanation to District Superintendent.
- Prepare a LEA Data Profile that includes a summary of previous CAPs and submitted results.
- Provide materials for training the Stakeholder Steering Committee on its role in the process.
- Present interview outlines and a Goals and Performance Indicators summary sheet.
- Provide a format and example of the Program Improvement Plan and Corrective Action Plan for non-compliance items.
- Offer file review software and a hard copy file review checklist.
- Collect and analyze off-site data from each LEA.
- Provide pre-determined fiscal support for LEA self-assessment activities.

The LEA Special Education Director has the responsibility to:

- Collect and analyze off-site data, relating it to the five program areas.
- Submit off-site data to USOE-SES Technical Assistant.
- Reconvene the Stakeholder Steering Committee and develop agendas for meetings.
- Set dates for Stakeholder Steering Committee meetings.
- Establish timelines for the Self-Assessment process.
- Allocate resources for Self-Assessment and Program Improvement Planning.

STEP 2: Organizing Data Collection Activities

The LEA Special Education Director has the responsibility to:

- Conduct the training meeting of the Stakeholder Steering Committee.
- Review LEA Data Profile provided by USOE and collect additional data, as needed.
- Facilitate review of program areas, goals, and performance indicators.
- Establish sub-committees and define assignments for collection and analysis of data from various sources.
- Determine the process and dates for file review, interviews, and other data collection.
- Facilitate subsequent meetings to review and analyze data and findings.

UTAH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING SYSTEM (UPIPS)

STEP 3: Conducting On-Site Data Collection

The LEA Special Education Director has the responsibility to:

- Compile and analyze student outcome data, including LRE, disproportionality, highly qualified staff, academic achievement, suspension and expulsion, LRBI, classification, prevalence, and other sources.
- Notify schools and staff who have been selected for file review and interviews.
- Collect data through surveys, interviews and/or focus groups of stakeholders.
- Conduct a limited number of file reviews on specific critical issues determined by previous CAPs and areas of state-wide interest as identified by the USOE.
- Begin the correction of individual file errors.
- Facilitate the analysis and compilation of collected data, relating it to the five program areas.
- Present findings and analysis to Stakeholder Steering Committee for review.
- Provide leadership to the Stakeholder Steering Committee in establishing Program Improvement Goals that address issues identified in the data sources listed above.
- Report any areas of non-compliance and suggest corrective actions.

Step 4: Creating the Self-Assessment Report

The LEA Special Education Director will:

- Prepare the Self-Assessment Report including all required elements:
 - LEA profile.
 - Description of the purpose and process of the Self-Assessment.
 - Explanation of stakeholder involvement including membership and activities of the Stakeholder Steering Committee.
 - Summary of all data collected during the Self-Assessment process.
 - Results of the Self-Assessment data analysis related to the ten goals in the five Program Areas.
 - List of strengths or exemplary practices of the special education program.
 - List of areas of non-compliance.
 - List of recommendations for program improvement of the special education program.
 - An Executive Summary.
 - A Special Education Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
 - A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for areas of non-compliance.

Step 5: Submission of Data to USOE-SES

By June 30, the LEA Special Education Director submits:

- The Self-Assessment Report to the USOE-SES Technical Assistant.
- The reimbursement request for UPIPS fiscal support to the State Director of Special Education.

UTAH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING SYSTEM (UPIPS)

The USOE-SES Technical Assistant to the LEA and/or the Monitoring Specialist are available to assist with any of the processes and activities described above. Please call the Monitoring Secretary if they may be of help. (801) 538-7936

Round 2--Year 2

**IMPLEMENTATION OF SELF-ASSESSMENT FINDINGS
& ON-SITE VALIDATION VISIT FROM USOE**

Step 1: Implement PIP & CAP

The LEA Special Education Director will:

- Initiate implementation of the LEA's Program Improvement Plan.
- Carry out Corrective Action Plan contained in Self-Assessment Report.
- Complete correction of file errors identified through self-assessment.
- Continue to self-monitor files.
- Submit evidence of individual file error correction to the USOE.
- USOE-SES staff is available to assist the director as necessary.

Step 2: Plan Validation Visit

The USOE-SES staff will:

- Identify schools and teachers selected for visitation.
- Collaborate with LEA in setting up schedule and details of on-site validation visit.

The LEA Special Education Director will:

- Collaborate with USOE-SES staff in setting up the on-site validation visit.
- Provide required information to monitoring specialist.
- Inform LEA staff of schedule and requirements during on-site visit.

Step 3: Conduct Visit

The USOE-SES staff will:

- Conduct the on-site visit to the LEA in order to validate the self-assessment findings and Program Improvement Plan goals.

Step 4: UPIPS Report

The USOE-SES staff will:

- Submit a UPIPS Final Report of validation visit findings to the LEA, including strengths, areas of systemic non-compliance, individual file reports, and recommendations for program improvement.

UTAH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING SYSTEM (UPIPS)

- Share UPIPS final report with the public.

The LEA Special Education Director and Stakeholder Steering Committee will:

- Share final UPIPS report with local School Board and Public.
- Submit evidence of sharing with public to SEA.
- Revise the LEA-wide Special Education Program Improvement Plan, as appropriate, to reflect additional findings after the SEA site visit and report.
- Submit Corrective Action Plans for any additional areas of non-compliance from the USOE UPIPS Final Report.
- Plan CSPD activities to facilitate PIP and CAP.

Step 5: Implement Plans

The LEA Special Education Director will:

- Continue to implement the Program Improvement Plan and Corrective Action Plan with revisions based on UPIPS Report.
- Implement CSPD to facilitate PIP and CAP.

Round 2--Year 3

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT GOALS & CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN & VERIFICATION OF RESULTS OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

The LEA Special Education Director will:

- Continue to implement its Program Improvement Plan.
- Continue to implement Corrective Action Plan activities.
- Continue to self-monitor files.
- Implement planned CSPD activities.
- Collect and review data to measure the effectiveness of the action steps for each Program Improvement goal.
- Revise the Program Improvement Plan based on continuous self-assessment.
- Submit evidence to verify results of Corrective Action Plan implementation.
- Submit annual progress reports on Program Improvement Plan to the USOE.

The USOE-SES staff will:

- Be available for technical assistance.
- Review Corrective Action Plan implementation results.
- Review annual progress reports on Corrective Action Plan and Program Improvement Plan.
- Conduct follow-up on-site visits if verification of results data are not submitted.

Round 2--Year 4

CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT GOALS

The LEA Special Education Director will:

- Continue to implement its Program Improvement Plan.
- Continue to self-monitor files.
- Continue to implement planned CSPD activities, as appropriate.
- Collect and review data to measure the effectiveness of the action steps for each goal.
- Revise the Program Improvement Plan based on continuous self-assessment.
- Submit annual progress reports on Program Improvement Plan to the USOE.

The USOE-SES staff will:

- Be available for technical assistance.
- Review annual progress reports on Program Improvement Plan.

Round 2--Year 5

CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT GOALS

The LEA Special Education Director will:

- Continue to implement its Program Improvement Plan.
- Continue to self-monitor files.
- Continue to implement planned CSPD activities.
- Collect and review data to measure the effectiveness of the action steps for each goal.
- Revise the Program Improvement Plan based on continuous self-assessment.
- Submit annual progress reports on Program Improvement Plan to the USOE.

The USOE-SES staff will:

- Be available for technical assistance.
- Review annual progress reports on Program Improvement Plan.